



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

THE DIRECTV GROUP, INC.  
PATENT DOCKET ADMINISTRATION  
CA / LA1 / A109  
2230 E. IMPERIAL HIGHWAY  
EL SEGUNDO, CA 90245

**COPY MAILED**

**FEB 25 2009**

**OFFICE OF PETITIONS**

In re Application of Kahn et al.	:	
Application No. 10/758,811	:	Decision on Petition
Filing Date: January 16, 2004	:	
Attorney Docket No. PD-200290	:	

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.182, filed September 4, 2008, to withdraw the terminal disclaimers filed March 4, 2008, in the above-identified application.

The petition is **dismissed**.

MPEP 1490 sets forth in pertinent part, "Petitions seeking to reopen the question of the propriety of the double patenting rejection that prompted the filing of the terminal disclaimer have not been favorably considered."

Inspection of the prosecution history of the instant application reveals that the terminal disclaimers were submitted to overcome rejections for obvious double patenting over amended claims 1-18 and 28-31 of copending Application No. 10/758,865 and claims 1-39 of Patent No. 7,203,314.

It is clear that petitioners are seeking to reopen the question of the propriety of the rejection made in the Office action of December 4, 2007. In essence, petitioner is attempting, by petition, to have the Office determine whether the double patenting rejection was proper.

It is the long-established policy of the Patent and Trademark Office to maintain the line of demarcation between petitionable and appealable subject matter. MPEP 1201. When the question of whether or not a given set of claims in one application or patent is distinct, or lies within the aegis of 35 USC 121, from another set of claims in another application or patent with respect to obviousness double patenting arises, that question relates to the merits of an invention, and the appropriate remedy for resolution of that issue ultimately lies by appeal as provided by statute. See e.g. In re Longi, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985). As noted by the court in In re Faust, 378 F.2d 966, 153 USPQ 813 (CCPA 1967) "the terminal disclaimer eliminates the necessity of considering what are most often exceedingly difficult questions. i.e., whether the subject matter of the appealed claims is obvious in view of the patent claims relied on as the basis for 'double patenting,' thus conserving judicial man hours both here and in the Patent Office." Further, it is well settled that the Commissioner will not, on petition, usurp the

functions or impinge upon the jurisdiction of the Board. See In re Dickerson, 299 F.2d 954, 958, 133 USPQ 39, 43 (CCPA 1962); Bayley's Restaurant v. Bailey's of Boston, Inc., 170 USPQ 43, 44 (Comm'r Pat. 1971).

Even assuming, *arguendo*, the relief requested should be considered on petition, petitioner is reminded that, as a general rule, public policy does not favor the restoration to the patentee [applicant] of something that has been freely dedicated to the public, particularly where the public interest is not protected in some manner, e.g., intervening rights in the case of a reissue patent. See Altoona Publix Theatres v. American Tri-Ergon Corp., 294 U.S. 477, 24 USPQ 308 (1935). Petitioner has failed to provide a reasonable, much less any, assurance that the public interest will, or can be, protected if the relief requested in this petition are given favorable consideration. In this regard, an applicant's use, and Office acceptance, of a terminal disclaimer is in the public interest because such encourages the disclosure of additional developments, the earlier filing of patent applications, and the earlier expiration of patents whereby the inventions covered become freely available to the public. See In re Jentoft, 392 F.2d 633, 157 USPQ 363 (CCPA 1968). It is brought to petitioner's attention that the principle against recapturing something that has been intentionally dedicated to the public dates back at least to Leggett v. Avery, 101 U.S. 246 (1879). While petitioner may now consider the previously filed disclaimers to be unnecessary, or unnecessarily limiting, petitioner is, nevertheless, confronted with what has been characterized as "an unhappy circumstance," rather than a circumstance(s) necessitating relief. Jentoft at 639 n. 6, 157 USPQ at 368 n. 6.

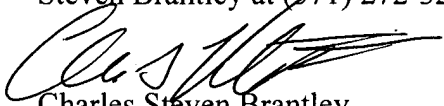
Petitioner had the opportunity to challenge the need for terminal disclaimers, on appeal, but instead freely chose to file terminal disclaimers to avoid the rejection. Moreover, petitioners has provided no explanation as to why filing of the terminal disclaimers, as opposed to contesting the propriety of the rejection, was caused or contributed to by circumstances beyond petitioner's control.

Petitioner may wish to take note of MPEP 1490 which states in part, "The filing of a continuation application other than a CPA, while abandoning the application in which the terminal disclaimer has been filed, will typically nullify the effect of a terminal disclaimer."

A petition fee of \$400 is required for a petition under 37 CFR 1.182. Therefore, \$400 has been charged to petitioner's deposit account.

Technology Center Art Unit 2436 will be informed the terminal disclaimers have not been withdrawn and the application, including the amendment filed September 4, 2008, will be further examined in due course.

Telephone inquiries regarding this communication should be directed to Petitions Attorney Steven Brantley at (571) 272-3203.



Charles Steven Brantley  
Senior Petitions Attorney  
Office of Petitions